Horsham District Council

DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:

DC/23/2309
Westons Farmhouse Annexe, Westons Hill, Itchingfield, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 0BD

DESCRIPTION:

Conversion of annexe to an agricultural workers dwelling.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

DC/24/0378	Variation of Condition 1 and 3 of previously approved application DC/24/0023 (Variation of condition 1 and 3 of previously approved application reference DC/23/1094 (Construction of agricultural track) relating to minor material changes to layout and addition of a French Drain) Relating to access design and materials.	Application Permitted on 03.05.2024
DC/24/0023	Variation of condition 1 and 3 of previously approved application reference DC/23/1094 (Construction of agricultural track) relating to minor material changes to layout and addition of a French Drain.	Application Permitted on 01.03.2024
DC/23/1810	Non Material Amendment to previously approved application DC/23/1094 (Construction of agricultural track) amendment to layout of the agricultural track, addition of a French drain, and removal of the cattle grid.	Application Refused on 22.11.2023
DC/23/1094	Construction of agricultural track.	Application Permitted on 18.08.2023
DC/17/1981	Alterations and extension to existing detached domestic outbuilding	Application Permitted on 07.12.2017

SITE AND SURROUNDS

The application site is located outside of any built up area boundary and as such is located in the countryside in planning policy terms.

The site is situated on Weston's Hill Road, which joins the A264 leading to Broadbridge Heath to the north, and Barns Green to the south. The site is located in a rural setting with agricultural fields located to the north, east and west, as well as agricultural buildings, including a farm shop to the south. A well screened mature tree line is located just beyond the site to the east.

The annexe is located to the east of Westons Farmhouse and has a separate access from Weston's Hill Road. The access leads to an area of hardstanding in front of and to the west of the annexe.

The annexe was permitted under DC/17/1981 and condition 4 states:

The accommodation hereby permitted shall be occupied solely for purposes ancillary to the occupation and enjoyment of Westons Farmhouse as a single dwellinghouse and shall not be used as a separate unit of accommodation.

Reason: The establishment of an additional independent unit of accommodation would give rise to an over- intensive use of the site and lead to an unsatisfactory relationship between independent units of living accommodation contrary to Policies 26 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015)."

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

This application seeks to convert the existing residential annexe building (permitted under DC/17/1981) to an agricultural workers dwelling. The annexe has an established separate access (DC/15/1212) from Weston's Hill and adjacent hardstanding parking.

The application does not include any proposed changes to the internal or external layout of the annexe.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):
Policy 1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development
Policy 2 - Strategic Policy: Strategic Development
Policy 3 - Strategic Policy: Development Hierarchy
Policy 7 - Strategic Policy: Economic Growth
Policy 9 - Employment Development
Policy 10 - Rural Economic Development
Policy 20 - Rural Workers Accommodation
Policy 24 - Strategic Policy: Environmental Protection
Policy 25 - Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
Policy 26 - Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection
Policy 30 - Protected Landscapes
Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
Policy 33 - Development Principles
Policy 34 - Cultural and Heritage Assets
Policy 35 - Strategic Policy: Climate Change
Policy 36 - Strategic Policy: Appropriate Energy Use
Policy 37 - Sustainable Construction
Policy 40 - Sustainable Transport
Policy 41 - Parking
Policy 42 - Strategic Policy: Inclusive Communities

Paragraph 33 of the NPPF requires that all development plans complete their reviews no later than 5 years from their adoption. Horsham District Council is currently in the process of reviewing its development plan however at this stage the emerging policies carry only limited weight in decision making. As the HDPF is now over 5 years old, the most important policies for the determination of this application must be considered as to whether they are 'out of date' (NPPF paragraph 11d). This includes, for applications involving the provision of housing, whether the Council can demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites (NPPF footnote 8).

The Council is currently unable to demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites, with the supply currently calculated as being 2.9 years. The presumption in favour of development within Paragraph 11d) of the NPPF therefore applies in the consideration of all applications for housing development within the District (unless footnote 7 or Paragraph 14 applies to relevant applications), with Policies 2, 4, 15 and 26 now carrying only moderate weight in decision making.

All other policies within the HDPF as itemised above have been assessed against the NPPF and are considered to be consistent such that they continue to attract significant weight in decision making.
Neighbourhood Plan:
Itchingfield neighbourhood plan has not yet formally been adopted.

Planning Advice Notes:
Facilitating Appropriate Development

Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

REPRESENTATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS RESPONSES

Where consultation responses have been summarised, it should be noted that Officers have had consideration of the full comments received, which are available to view on the public file at www.horsham.gov.uk

Consultations:

INTERNAL CONSULTATIONS

HDC Conservation: No Objection

The proposal will not affect the listed building any more than it currently does

HDC Environmental Health: Objection

The application proposes to introduce a dwelling in immediate proximity to a yard and large buildings still in agricultural or commercial use at Weston's Farm to support the farming activities. The plan showing the use of the farm buildings illustrates this. There is a history of complaints concerning activities in the farm yard which illustrate issues that can occur. These have included:

- noise and dust for operation a grain dryer,
- odour from the housing of livestock
- insect nuisance associated with housing of livestock
- noise from farm machinery and vehicles operating extended hours.

However, action for statutory nuisance was not taken as the complaints were occasioned by typical farming activity is unlikely to be successful. Where statutory nuisance arises from commercial or industrial uses, the defence of best practicable means is available, together with reasonable excuse.

It should also be noted that Nuisance does not equate to loss of amenity. Significant loss of amenity will often occur at lower levels of emission than would constitute a statutory nuisance. It is therefore important for planning authorities to consider properly, loss of amenity from emissions in the planning process in its wider context. Broader amenity issues should therefore be considered when assessing applications.

From my previous contacts with the tenant of Westons Farm, it is understood that the farm is also owned by the Christs Hospital School and they should be aware that introduction of a new residential receptor may lead to further conflicts with the farming operations. This could result in restrictions on the farming activity and breach of the principle of agent of change set out in the NPPF.

The use of the farm buildings may change over time. There is no restriction to prevent buildings in the vicinity of the proposed dwelling being used more intensively than at present. Such an intensification in activity could generate noise and disturbance that may adversely impact the amenity of the proposed dwelling.

In view of these considerations, do not recommend that the application is approved.

Reading Agricultural: No Objection

The applicant, Christ's Hospital Foundation, owns Westons Farm which is rented under a Farm Business Tenancy, trading as Westons Farm Limited. Mr Exwood has farmed Westons Farm since 1989 and the current tenancy agreement is due to expire in September 2034.

The landholding at Westons Farm extends to 320 hectares (791 acres) and comprises 28 hectares of permanent pasture and 289 hectares of arable land, with the remaining area comprising woodland, farmyards and tracks. Westons Farmyard comprises traditional farm buildings (including office and

shop), steel portal frame storage building, farm and machinery workshop, grain store, temporary grain/machinery store/livestock housing, greenhouses and the farmhouse occupied by Mr Exwood.

Westons Farm Limited also farms Sluetts Farm which houses the dairy beef herd and benefits from permission for a temporary rural worker's dwelling (DC/23/0306 approved February 2024). Sluetts Farmyard comprises a straw storage building, livestock buildings, cattle shed, silage clamps, slurry lagoon and feed store.

The applicant purchased Field Farm in October 2017, which extends to 181 hectares (18 hectares permanent pasture and 152 hectares arable) which is also let to Mr Exwood on a Farm Business Tenancy Agreement which expires in September 2034. Field Farmyard comprises two grain stores and a livestock building which will be constructed in 2024.

Alongside the arable rotation and grass silage production, Westons Farm Limited also have the following livestock enterprises:

- 50 ewes – spring lambing;
- 35 suckler cows – spring calving;
- 10 fattening pigs on site throughout the year; and
- 240 dairy beef animals (purchased at two weeks old and finished at 22 months old) finishing annually which is proposed to be increased to 300 head annually following completion of the new livestock building at Fields Farm.

The sheep, suckler cows and pigs are kept at Westons Farmyard, with all progeny being reared and finished with the meat sold through the farm shop. All farming operations are carried out by farm staff with the exception of baling and forage conservation. There is an existing dwelling at Westons Farmhouse which is occupied by Mr Exwood in line with the occupancy condition of the Farm Business Tenancy Agreement.

The Agricultural Worker's Dwelling Appraisal details that the proposed conversion of the annexe will allow there to be one worker resident at Westons Farm and available at all times. It is detailed that Mr Exwood has off farm commitments and there are times when he is not present on the holding to address and react promptly to any emergencies

This application proposes the conversion of the annexe (approved under APP/Z3825/A/08/2093003 and DC/17/1981) to provide accommodation with its own access for an additional full-time worker on the holding.

Condition 4 of DC/17/1981 states:

"The accommodation hereby permitted shall be occupied solely for purposes ancillary to the occupation and enjoyment of Westons Farmhouse as a single dwellinghouse and shall not be used as a separate unit of accommodation.

Reason: The establishment of an additional independent unit of accommodation would give rise to an over- intensive use of the site and lead to an unsatisfactory relationship between independent units of living accommodation contrary to Policies 26 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015)."

The proposed conversion of the annexe will provide a kitchen/dining/living room, utility, two bedrooms, bathroom, en-suite bathroom and office. It will be occupied by a full-time worker employed by Westons Farm Limited.

The primary test set out in the NPPF and Local Plan Policy 20 is an assessment as to whether it is essential for a rural worker to live at, or near, their place of work. In this case, the applicant and tenant consider it essential that there is a requirement to provide additional on-site accommodation for a full-time employed agricultural worker in order to ensure that the management and welfare of the livestock kept on site is not compromised.

An assessment of the essential need for a rural worker to live at or near their place of work requires the following:

- an evaluation of the risks involved;
- the frequency and type of out-of-hours emergency that might arise;
- the scale and loss that could be incurred should that emergency situation occur;
- the potential for an on-site worker to identify the problem; and
- the ability of that resident worker to rectify the problem.

Legislation requires that all animals are managed in a manner that accords them freedom from thirst, hunger and malnutrition; appropriate comfort and shelter; freedom from fear; freedom to display most normal patterns of behaviour, and it is accepted that without good stockmanship, animal welfare can never be adequately protected.

Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 it is an offence to cause unnecessary suffering to any animal. The Act also contains a Duty of Care to animals which means anyone responsible for an animal must take reasonable steps to make sure the animal's needs and its welfare are met. The overall responsibility or 'duty of care' for animal welfare for all the livestock at the application lies with the applicant and/or his appointed deputy.

The issue of security is also now acknowledged by the Police and Insurers to be an increasing problem in rural areas and outlying isolated farms, especially where buildings, machinery and livestock are kept and are at risk of theft, fire, trespass and vandalism – and such risks can only adequately be managed with on-site supervision.

The Essential Need at Westons Farm are likely to arise from:

- the general welfare and care of all livestock on the farm;
- the general welfare and management of all breeding stock where assistance may be required at calving and lambing:
- the general care and attention of the newborn calf and lamb ensuring they have received adequate colostrum, again assistance may be required to encourage suckling;
- the reproductive requirements of the breeding stock, such as monitoring heat detection (oestrus) and its synchronisation;
- the general care and attention of a large number of 2-week old purchased calves;
- the close observation and monitoring of newly purchased calves for any health issues and ensuring they drink milk substitute (bucket/bottle fed). Milk substitute is required by young calves until they are weaned;
- the regular inspection of livestock whether housed or at grass for signs of disease or distress and to rectify the problem promptly;
- provision of security for animals from theft or malicious attack; and
- dealing with unforeseen emergencies.

The Agricultural Worker's Dwelling Appraisal provides details of labour calculations based on the John Nix Pocketbook which RAC would consider appropriate however it is noted that the calf rearing and beef finishing enterprises take place at Sluetts Farm and at Field Farm (once the livestock building is completed).

The issue of security is also recognised in the Dwelling Appraisal and RAC accepts that rural crime has been increasing with Police and Insurance companies concerned about the increase in thefts from isolated farms. RAC would concur that the provision of an additional rural workers dwelling and the presence of an additional agricultural worker living on site can act as a deterrent as can other forms of security such as CCTV cameras and secure gating.

At Westons Farm the on-site livestock labour requirement relates to the sheep flock, suckler herd and fattening pigs. The provision of an additional dwelling will allow the essential need to continue to be met at all times when Mr Exwood is not available and off-site.

Based on the labour requirements to meet the welfare needs of the livestock and for the continuation and development of the livestock enterprise, there is an essential need for the ready availability of a key rural worker at Westons Farm to be resident in the proposed converted annexe. The proposed annexe will be occupied a full-time worker employed in the business Westons Farms Limited.

The NPPF deals with the concept of sustainable development at a strategic rather than an individual enterprise level. In terms of economic development, it is concerned with contributing to and building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation.

In this context RAC considers any assessment of economic sustainability as the ability of the business/enterprise to utilise its resources which allows it to function properly; it has to have the ability and necessary funds available to stay in business.

Local Plan Policy 20 requires evidence to demonstrate the viability of the rural business for which the housing is required.

In terms of demonstrating viability, any viable business should be generating profits sufficient to provide a return on investment – in agriculture a figure of 2.5% is usually cited; reward the owner for any unpaid labour – equivalent to the minimum wage; and provide for the build cost of the dwelling.

The Dwelling Appraisal notes that Westons Farm Limited was incorporated in 2020 and prior to that traded as a sole trader. There are no proposed changes to the established farming systems.

The applicant's agent has provided confidential financial details for the year ended 30 September 2023 which show the agricultural business to be profitable and sustainable.

Overall, RAC would conclude that the applicant's farming enterprise is profitable and sustainable and likely to remain so in the future. The build costs for the conversion of the annexe can be met by the profit from the farming business.

The existing dwelling at Westons Farm is occupied by Mr Exwood and it is detailed that the Farm Business Tenancy Agreement restricts the occupancy of the dwelling to be solely that of Mr Exwood and is not available to other farm workers.

The Dwelling Appraisal includes details of a search of Rightmove in June 2024 of sold properties but does not assess those available for sale or rent. RAC would note that the postcode referred to in the report relates to Sluetts Farm, not Westons Farm

A search of Rightmove on 15 July 2024 displays four properties (excluding retirement properties) for sale within 1 mile of the application site postcode (RH13 0BD) ranging from £375,000 for a two bedroom leasehold dwelling to £1.99 million for a five bedroom dwelling. RAC would consider these are beyond the affordability of a rural worker.

The applicant's tenant has an established livestock enterprise operating at Westons Farm. There is a justified and accepted essential need for a farm worker to be resident on site to ensure that the management and welfare of the livestock at Westons Farm either housed or at grass is not compromised. The applicant's proposal to convert the residential annexe to provide accommodation for a full-time rural worker employed by Westons Farm Limited is considered compliant with national and local planning policy.

OUTSIDE AGENCIES

WSCC Highways: No Objection

The site is located and accessed via Westons Hill which is a C-classified road, subject to a 60mph speed limit. Vehicular access to the annexe will be via the existing independent access onto Westons Hill, with no proposed alterations.

An inspection of data supplied to WSCC by Sussex Police over a period of the past five years reveals that there have been no recorded injury accidents within the vicinity of the site. Therefore there is no evidence to suggest that the existing access is operating unsafely or that the proposal would exacerbate an existing safety concern.

This proposal is not anticipated to result in material intensification of use onto Westons Hill or the wider road network.

The supporting documents do not demonstrate parking layout for the existing annexe, however from observation of the site plan there appears sufficient space to accommodate 2-3 vehicles with space to turn on site. The parking layout will not be altered as a result of the proposal.

In order to promote the use of sustainable transport methods, the LPA may wish to request that a covered and secure cycle provision is provided for the dwelling, the LPA may wish to consider if this is a reasonable request, advisable condition wording included below.

The LHA does not consider that this proposal would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network, therefore is not contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 115), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal.

Southern Water: Comment

There are no public foul sewers in the area to serve this development. The applicant is advised to examine alternative means of foul disposal.

Natural England: Standing Advice

It cannot be concluded that existing abstraction within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone is not having an adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley SAC/SPA/Ramsar sites. Developments within Sussex North must therefore must not add to this impact and one way of achieving this is to demonstrate water neutrality. The definition of water neutrality is the use of water in the supply area before the development is the same or lower after the development is in place.

To achieve this Natural England is working in partnership with all the relevant authorities to secure water neutrality collectively through a water neutrality strategy. Whilst the strategy is evolving, Natural England advises that decisions on planning applications should await its completion. However, if there are applications which a planning authority deems critical to proceed in the absence of the strategy, then Natural England advises that any application needs to demonstrate water neutrality.

Parish Comments:

The intimate proximity of the annex with the active farm retained in the current application is bound to cause problems due to opening windows facing directly into the farms working area, since the two properties may well become owned by different parties.

For this reason, consider that the design of the annex makes it unsuitable as an independent property. The current access to Westons Farm House was permitted under DC/15/1212 as an additional point of access with two car parking spaces at the main entrance. Westons Farm House has 5 bedrooms and thus needs more than 2 car parking spaces to comply with current building standards.

Representations:

None received
Member Comments:

None received

HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUALITY:

The application has been considered having regard to Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Human Rights Act 1998, which sets out a person's rights to the peaceful enjoyment of property and Article 8 of the same Act, which sets out their rights in respect to private and family life and for the home. Officers consider that the proposal would not be contrary to the provisions of the above Articles.

The application has also been considered in accordance with Horsham District Council's public sector equality duty, which seeks to prevent unlawful discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between people in a diverse community, in accordance with Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. In this case, the proposal is not anticipated to have any potential impact from an equality perspective.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development:

Policy 20 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) states that outside the defined built-up area, new housing for rural workers will be supported provided that there is a functional need for the dwelling and the occupation of the dwelling is to support the established business use; and evidence is submitted to demonstrate the viability of the rural business for which the housing is required.

Policy 26 of the HDPF states that outside built-up area boundaries, the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside will be protected against inappropriate development. Any proposal must be essential to its countryside location, and in addition meet one of the following criteria: support the needs of agriculture or forestry; enable the extraction of minerals or the disposal of waste; provide for quiet informal recreational use; or enable the sustainable development of rural areas. In addition, proposals must be of a scale appropriate to its countryside character and location. Development will be considered acceptable where it does not lead, either individually or cumulatively, to a significant increase in the overall level of activity in the countryside, and protects, and/or conserves, and/or enhances, the key features and characteristics of the landscape character area.

NPPF Paragraph 82 deals with housing in the countryside and notes; *"In rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs.* Paragraph 83 continues that *"to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services…".*

However, paragraph 84 maintains the presumption against isolated new dwellings in the countryside unless they are essential, noting that planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless one or more of the following circumstances apply, including among others, that there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside.

Planning Practice Guidance entitled "Housing Needs of Different Groups" outlines how the need for isolated homes in the countryside for essential rural workers can be assessed. Considerations that may be relevant include: evidence of the necessity for a rural worker to live at, or in close proximity to, their place of work to ensure the effective operation of an agricultural, forestry, or similar land-based rural enterprise; the degree to which there is confidence that the enterprise will remain viable for the foreseeable future; whether the provision of an additional dwelling on site is essential for the continued viability of a farming business through the farm succession process; whether the need can be met through improvements to existing accommodation on the site, providing such improvements are appropriate taking into account their scale, appearance, and local context; and in the case of new enterprises, whether it is appropriate to consider granting permission for a temporary dwelling for a trial period.

The primary test set out in the NPPF and Policy 20 of the HDPF is an assessment as to whether it is essential for a rural worker to live at, or near, their place of work.

The Council's Agricultural Consultant has assessed the information provided within the submitted 'Agricultural Workers Dwelling Appraisal June 2024' and Planning Statement. Through the course of the assessment of the application the description of development was changed and they are now seeking to convert the annexe to a 'rural workers dwelling' with an agricultural workers tie in the form of a condition.

Westons Farm extends to 320 hectares and comprises 28 hectares of permanent pasture and 289 hectares of arable land with the remaining area comprising woodland, farmyards and tracks. Westons Farmyard comprises traditional farm buildings (including office and shop), steel portal frame storage building, farm and machinery workshop, grain store, temporary grain/machinery store/livestock housing, greenhouses and the farmhouse occupied by Mr Exwood. The applicant also farms 'Field Farm' and 'Sluetts farm'. The enterprise includes arable rotation, grass silage production and livestock including ewes, suckler cows, pigs and dairy beef.

The proposed agricultural dwelling will allow there to be one worker resident at Westons Farm and available at all times. The proposal requires no external or internal alterations to the building.

It is acknowledged that the Essential Need at Westons Farm are likely to arise from:

- the general welfare and care of all livestock on the farm;
- the general welfare and management of all breeding stock where assistance may be required at calving and lambing:
- the general care and attention of the newborn calf and lamb ensuring they have received adequate colostrum, again assistance may be required to encourage suckling;
- the reproductive requirements of the breeding stock, such as monitoring heat detection (oestrus) and its synchronisation;
- the general care and attention of a large number of 2-week old purchased calves;
- the close observation and monitoring of newly purchased calves for any health issues young calves until they are weaned;
- the regular inspection of livestock whether housed or at grass for signs of disease or distress and to rectify the problem promptly;
- provision of security for animals from theft or malicious attack; and
- dealing with unforeseen emergencies.

At Westons Farm the on site livestock labour requirement relates to the sheep flock, suckler herd and fattening pigs. The provision of an additional dwelling will allow the essential need to continue to be met at all times when Mr Exwood is not available and off-site.

Based on the labour requirements to meet the welfare needs of the livestock and for the continuation and development of the livestock enterprise, there is an essential need for the ready availability of a key rural worker at Westons Farm to be resident in the proposed converted annexe. The proposed annexe will be occupied a full-time worker employed in the business Westons Farms Limited. The applicant's farming enterprise is profitable and sustainable and likely to remain so in the future. The build costs for the conversion of the annexe can be met by the profit from the farming business.

Based on the information submitted, there is considered to be an essential need for as farm worker to be resident on site to ensure that the management and welfare of the livestock at Westons Farm either housed or at grass is not compromised.

The applicant's proposal to convert the residential annexe to provide accommodation for a full-time rural worker employed by Westons Farm Limited is considered compliant with national and local planning policy, in particular HDPF policies 20 and 26, subject to all other material considerations (discussed Below).

Design and Appearance:

Policies 32 and 33 of Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) seek to promote development of high quality and inclusive design for all development in the district, ensuring that it is complementary of local distinctive character and heritage, integrating with their surroundings. Furthermore, these policies ensure that the scale, massing and appearance of the development is of a high standard of design and layout and where relevant, relates sympathetically with the built surroundings.

This proposal does not include external or internal alterations to the building. The design and appearance was approved under DC/17/1981 and is considered to appropriately reflect the character of the site and surroundings in accordance with policies 32 and 33 of the HDPF.

The amenities of the occupiers of adjoining properties and future occupiers:

Policy 33 of the HDPF provides that development will be required to ensure a design that avoids unacceptable harm to the occupiers/users of nearby property and land with sufficient regard to the sensitivity of surrounding development.

The application was approved for a residential annexe that was linked to the main farmhouse under DC/17/1981. This assessed the amenity impact of the location of the dwelling within proximity to a working farm, and considered that it was acceptable with the 'non-severance' condition. At this time, Westons Farmhouse and the subject building were outside of the ownership of Westons Farm.

An objection has been received from Environmental Health, raising concerns in relation to future amenity levels of occupiers due to the potential nuisance from the intensity of farming activities in close proximity. It is considered that an open-market dwelling here would not be appropriate in light of these potential amenity conflicts. However, the application proposes a rural workers dwelling where the occupation would tied to the farm. Given the need to be close to the agricultural activities, where such a relationship would be anticipated and accepted, it is not considered that a refusal on amenity grounds could be justified. A condition is recommended to secure the restriction of the occupation to a rural worker.

Highways Impacts:

Policy 40 of the Horsham District Planning Framework states that transport access and ease of movement is a key factor in the performance of the local economy. The need for sustainable transport and safe access is vital to improve development across the district. Policy 41 of the Horsham District Planning Framework states that development that involved the loss of existing parking spaces will only be allowed if suitable alternative provision has been secured elsewhere. Adequate parking facilities must be provided within the developments to meet the needs of the anticipated users.

No access or parking amendments are proposed and these continue to be adequate and acceptable.

Water Neutrality:

The application site falls within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone as defined by Natural England which draws its water supply from groundwater abstraction at Hardham. Natural England has issued a Position Statement for applications within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone which states that it cannot be concluded with the required degree of certainty that new development in this zone would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites.

Natural England advises that plans and projects affecting sites where an existing adverse effect is known will be required to demonstrate, with sufficient certainty, that they will not contribute further to an existing adverse effect. The received advice note advises that the matter of water neutrality should be addressed in assessments to agree and ensure that water use is offset for all new developments within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone.

A Water Neutrality Appraisal has been submitted. This outlines that there will be no change in the amount of water used at the site as a result of this change of use from 'annexe' to 'rural workers dwelling'. This is considered reasonable as the estimated average occupancy of the dwelling will continue to be the same. The proposal has therefore been screened out of the Appropriate

Assessment process and the proposal is considered to be water neutral without any additional mitigation requirements.

Conclusions:

It is considered that the proposal would make a modest contribution to the rural economy of the District and would represent a form and level of activity appropriate to its countryside setting not amounting to a significant intensification of use.

As advised by the Council's Agricultural Consultants, the applicant has demonstrated an essential need for an agricultural workers dwelling to serve the use of the wider agricultural site, in accordance with the submitted evidence, and therefore the principle of development can be supported in this instance.

The proposal has shown that water neutrality can be demonstrated.

On balance it is considered that the proposal satisfies the relevant policies of the development plan, and can be recommended for approval accordingly, subject to the conditions listed below.

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL)

Horsham District Council has adopted a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule which took effect on 1st October 2017.

It is considered that this development constitutes CIL liable development.

Use Description	Proposed	Existing	Net Gain
District Wide Zone 1	137.13	137.12	0
		Total Gain	**0**
		Total Demolition	**0**

Please note that the above figures will be reviewed by the CIL Team prior to issuing a CIL Liability Notice and may therefore change.

Exemptions and/or reliefs may be applied for up until the commencement of a chargeable development.

In the event that planning permission is granted, a CIL Liability Notice will be issued thereafter. CIL payments are payable on commencement of development.

Recommendation: Application Permitted

Conditions:

2 **Standard Time Condition**: The development hereby permitted shall begin before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

3 **Regulatory Condition**: The occupation of the dwelling shall be limited to a person solely or mainly working, or last working, in the locality in agriculture or in forestry, or a widow or widower of such a person, and to any resident dependants.

Reason: The site lies in an area where, in accordance with Policy 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) development which cannot be justified as essential to the needs of agriculture or forestry would not normally be permitted.

4 **Regulatory Condition**: Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (and/or any Order revoking and/or reenacting that Order no development falling within Classes A, AA, B, C, E and G of Part 1 of Schedule 2 (amend classes and schedule as necessary) of the order shall be erected, constructed or placed within the curtilage(s) of the development hereby permitted without express planning consent from the Local Planning Authority first being obtained.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity and due to nature and use of the dwelling as a dwelling For an agriculture worker in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE STATEMENT

Statement pursuant to Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received, in order to be able to, where possible, grant permission.

Plans list for: DC/23/2309
(The approved plans will form Condition 1 on the Decision Notice of all Permitted applications)

Schedule of plans/documents **approved**:

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Received Date
Site plan	Existing Site Plan	001	21.12.2023
Site plan	Proposed Site Plan	002	21.12.2023
Floor plan	Proposed Ground Floor Plan - Option C	202	21.12.2023
Elevation plan	Existing Elevations	105	30.01.2024
Elevation plan	Proposed Elevations	205	30.01.2024
Roof plan	Proposed Roof Plan	201	12.02.2024
Roof plan	Existing Roof Plan	101	12.02.2024
Location plan		NONE	21.12.2023
Floor plan	Existing Ground Floor Plan	100	21.12.2023

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Kate Turner Date: 06.08.2024

Authorising Officer sign/initial Tamara Dale Date: 17.09.2024